

three, it must be efficient. This discretion can be challenged under the administrative procedure act.

For all these reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose the substitute.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds to correct the misstatement of fact by the distinguished chairman who stated that churches can discriminate. They can, but not with Federal funds. This bill would allow them to discriminate with Federal funds. The motion to substitute would say they cannot.

Mr. Speaker, I will later include for the RECORD the letter from Rosa Parks saying she does not support discrimination with Federal funds.

ROSA & RAYMOND PARKS
INSTITUTE FOR SELF DEVELOPMENT,
Detroit, MI, June 26, 2001.

Hon. JOHN CONYERS, Jr.,
Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee,
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington,
DC.

DEAR JOHN: As you know, I support legislative efforts to enhance the ability of religious and other faith-based groups to receive government funding in order to respond to community problems.

I believe that helping grassroots churches access this funding can be fully consistent with our civil rights laws and the First Amendment. This is why I want to express my support for amendments you plan to offer when the House Judiciary Committee considers H.R. 7 which would insure that government funds provided to religious organizations are not used to keep churches or other non-profits from working together for the betterment of us all. We do not want to change the 1964 Civil Rights Bill that we fought so hard to achieve.

Churches already know that they cannot use food or other services they may provide as an excuse to force people to accept their religious views, while using government funds. I am certainly in support of making sure that does not happen.

John, we have both spent our entire lives fighting against discrimination and in favor of the protections set forth in our Bill of Rights. The last thing we would want to do is permit H.R. 7 to be used to narrow the civil rights laws or to intrude on the First Amendment. It is my hope that adoption of these amendments will help broaden the bipartisan support for the bill and allow the measure to be quickly passed into law so that churches can increase their role in fighting poverty and other urban ills.

God bless you and your good work.

Peace and Prosperity,

ROSA PARKS.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the distinguished minority leader.

(Mr. GEPHARDT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in favor of this substitute. I believe it is a superior bill to deal with this very important problem.

I am saddened to stand before the Members in opposition to the language of the bill that is on the floor. In my view, this bill represents a missed opportunity to extend the good works of faith-based organizations.

I am a strong supporter of not-for-profit and faith-based organizations. I believe they provide tremendous help to people all over this country. They feed the hungry. They put roofs over people's heads. They tend to the most underprivileged in our society, the poorest members of our communities. They are vital to every community in America, and as forces for good in our society, they are simply irreplaceable.

But I do not believe that we should accept the premise of the legislation before us. I believe in the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." I do not think that we should expand government support for institutions at the expense of fundamental civil rights and antidiscrimination protections for all Americans.

Millions of people, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, women, gays and lesbians, the disabled, people of all different faiths, enjoy more opportunity and equality because of these laws.

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These are living, breathing parts of the American democracy, making a tremendous difference in people's everyday lives.

I believe the President's faith-based initiative rolls back these protections; protections which ironically our leading reverends and Rabbis and religious luminaries have fought for and won; protections which further the fundamental humanist principles of equality, individual liberty, and freedom.

The consequences of this bill, unintended or not, are that it will be easier for these important institutions to ignore fundamental State, local, and Federal antidiscrimination laws. Just last week, The Washington Post reported that the Bush administration had reached some kind of an agreement with the Salvation Army. In exchange for political support, the White House would consider exemption for the Salvation Army from local and State laws protecting gay Americans from discrimination. This was a sad development, and it indicates the kinds of problems this law creates for potentially millions of Americans in every corner of our society.

I am also concerned that the bill has a tax incentive that is not paid for, and a very small incentive that will have little or no effect on charitable giving. We continue to worry about going into Medicare and Social Security Trust Funds in this budget, and we should not pass new tax breaks without finding offsets so we do not invade these critical programs.

Finally, I think this bill violates the fundamental church-State separation that is still a fundamental principle of our democracy. This bill will invite government regulation of religious institutions; and through a little known loophole, it will invite government scrutiny of the allocation of government-wide vouchers, which will blur the line separating church from State, weakening our Bill of Rights.

In short, I do not think this bill is what the American people want, and I do not believe this is what the House of Representatives wants for our country. Americans enjoy the wonderful protections afforded by the Bill of Rights, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the countless critical civil rights laws at State and local level. They have made more freedom and more equality everyday reality in people's lives. I urge Members to vote for this substitute so that we can support faith-based institutions in ways that will not harm the people of this great democracy but will uphold the role of faith in our great and diverse Nation.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to engage the author of the bill in a colloquy.

Many H.R. 7 supporters have questioned why this issue is suddenly being discussed, since the most recent version of the charitable choice signed into law last year included the following provision: "Nothing in this section shall be construed to modify or affect the provisions of any other Federal or State law or any regulation that relates to discrimination in employment." Is that not correct?

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KIRK. I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, yes, that is an accurate characterization.

Mr. KIRK. H.R. 7, as currently written, does not include similar language prohibiting the preemption of State and local laws; is that not correct?

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. If the gentleman will continue to yield, yes, that is correct.

Mr. KIRK. If a State law prohibits discrimination based on a particular characteristic, and in a religious organization would ordinarily, based on State law, be required to comply with that law, would H.R. 7 change that situation in any way?

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KIRK. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, yes, H.R. 7 would change this situation, in a particular instance. If a religious organization were to use funds where the State funds have been commingled with Federal funds, it could assert its right under subsection (d) and (e) of H.R. 7 against the enforcement of State or local procurement provisions that limited the religious organization's ability to staff on a religious basis.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for that clarification.

Several constitutional lawyers have informed me that H.R. 7 would indeed change the existing situation. This is precisely where we seem to most disagree on the direction our policy